

Translating Feeling: The Bible, Affections and Protestantism in England c.1660–c.1750

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This article examines the way in which English Protestants of the post-Restoration period translated the affective precepts of the Bible into their own devotional practice. In so doing, it challenges persistent narratives that have understood late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century religion as languishing under an apparent 'reaction against enthusiasm'. By examining the language used in the life-writings of English Protestants in the north-west of England c.1660–c.1750, it demonstrates how biblical discourses on feeling were translated into lay and clerical accounts of their devotional practice. Drawing upon the work of Thomas Dixon and Barbara Rosenwein, the article shows the centrality of biblical injunctions to feeling within sermons and personal devotional practice. Moreover, it exhibits the manner in which affective discourses in the Book of Psalms in particular were used and translated into everyday religious experience. The Bible is shown as a text of affective instruction for the individuals discussed here.

In his commentary on the Bible, first published between 1707 and 1712, the Presbyterian Matthew Henry (1662–1714), minister of a nonconformist congregation in Chester, argued that the Bible was not merely 'the Touchstone we are to appeal to, and try Doctrines by' but also contained the manner 'by which we must in every thing order our Affections and Conversations, and from which we must always take our Measures'.¹ Henry understood the Bible as the primary model for the control but also, and crucially, the use of feeling in everyday devotion. The roles of the Bible in shaping interpersonal relationships, and as a source of moral instruction and spiritual succour have been well explored.² Yet the Bible also provided a model for feeling and indeed one against which one could measure one's

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¹ Matthew Henry, *An Exposition of All the Books of the Old and New Testament*, 6 vols, 3rd edn (London, 1725), 1: [iii].

² Naomi Tadmor has explored how it was the 'Englishing' of the Bible (through various translations including Wyclif, Tyndale, Coverdale, Geneva and King James) which

feeling, a practice which was understood as a particularly important part of properly conducting devotional duties. The life-writings (biographies, diaries, letter books and notebooks) of Protestants in the north-west of England exhibited a desire to translate the affective precepts of the Bible into their own devotional exercises. As such, they demonstrated a continued commitment to a vigorous religiosity, guided by the Bible, which has often been downplayed in historiographical narratives focusing on the reaction against enthusiasm.³ N. H. Keeble, Isabel Rivers and Dewey D. Wallace have observed the role of the heart within the religious culture that followed the Restoration of both king and Church.⁴ Yet these historians, to varying extents, have identified this culture with the nonconformist minority and as one that was in decline, particularly from the turn of the eighteenth century. But in the north-west of England, Protestants, both those who conformed to the Church of England and those who did not, exhibited that affective piety observed by Wallace and Keeble in the didactic material produced by leading clerics, and the literature penned by John Bunyan and John Milton was a quotidian aspect of their devotion throughout the period. Even those in this region who

constructed, for example, the Christian, and consequently social, duty of neighbourliness: *The Social Universe of the English Bible: Scripture, Society and Culture in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 2010), 16–26; G. F. Nuttall, *Richard Baxter and Philip Doddridge: A Study in a Tradition*, Friends of Dr Williams's Library Fifth Lecture (London, 1951), 6–7; Roger Thomas, 'Parties in Nonconformity', in C. G. Bolam et al., *The English Presbyterians: From Elizabethan Puritanism to Modern Unitarianism* (London, 1968), 93–112, at 102–4; Jeremy Schildt, 'Reading the Bible in Seventeenth-Century England: A Nonconformist Case-Study', *Bunyan Studies* 15 (2011), 53–63.

³ G. Williamson, *Seventeenth-Century Contexts* (London, 1960), ch. 9; J. D. Walsh, 'Origins of the Evangelical Revival', in *Essays in Modern English Church History, in Memory of Norman Sykes*, ed. G. V. Bennett and J. D. Walsh (London, 1966), 132–62, at 142; Bolam et al., *English Presbyterians*, 25–6; Michael R. Watts, *The Dissenters*, 1: *From the Reformation to the French Revolution* (Oxford, 1978), particularly 287–300; M. Heyd, 'The Reaction to Enthusiasm in the Seventeenth Century', *JMH* 53 (1981), 258–80; John Spurr, "'Rational Religion" in Restoration England', *JHI* 49 (1988), 563–85, at 564; Phyllis Mack, *Heart Religion in the British Enlightenment: Gender and Emotion in Early Methodism* (Cambridge, 2011), 45–6; Grant Tapsell, 'Introduction: The Later Stuart Church in Context', in idem, ed., *The Later Stuart Church, 1660–1714* (Manchester, 2012), 2.

⁴ N. H. Keeble, *The Literary Culture of Nonconformity in Later Seventeenth-Century England* (Leicester, 1987), 18–24, 207–9; Isabel Rivers, *Reason, Grace and Sentiment: A Study of the Language of Religion and Ethics in England, 1660–1780*, 2 vols (Cambridge, 2000), 1: 125–46; Dewey D. Wallace Jr, *Shapers of English Calvinism, 1660–1714: Variety, Persistence, and Transformation* (New York, 2011), particularly in regard to his discussion of the works of Richard Alleine: *ibid.* 132–53.

only attended the Church of England continued to translate biblical injunctions to, and models of, feeling into their own writings.

The opposition between head and heart which Rivers infers from even Richard Baxter's work, and which Alec Ryrie has claimed began to be constructed in this period, was not a strong feature of the life-writings explored here.⁵ By no means was all feeling understood as an unalloyed good by these lay and clerical Protestants. The concern to avoid the sectarianism and extremes of the Interregnum period, understood as product of excessive and misaligned religious enthusiasm, should not be underestimated. It is also important, however, to avoid a picture of late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century English Protestantism that is caricatured in terms of high-church formalism, low-church moralism and dissenting rationalism, insularity and reluctance to look beyond their own congregations. The period between the Restoration and the advent of the Evangelical Revival witnessed an intensely felt religiosity, to the extent that feeling remained an important medium of devotion.

A closer understanding of the linguistic construction of feeling, which Thomas Dixon has called for, demonstrates the affective quality of devotional practice within the period 1660–1750.⁶ The combination of a latitudinarian emphasis on the role of human understanding with the notion that feeling was productive of moral action (resulting in the head's dominance over the heart), which Rivers observes in Richard Baxter's work, was not a novel approach to reason.⁷ Baxter's construction of the relationship between feeling and reason was consistent with well-established Christian philosophy. Dixon has observed that in Thomist thought, still dominant in the Christian tradition up to the end of the eighteenth century, the rational appetites fell within what might be constructed in the modern period as the gamut of emotional experience.⁸ The passions were also understood by Aquinas as only being sinful where they were not under rational control. Aquinas included 'hope (*spes*), fear (*timor*), joy (*gaudium*) and sorrow (*tristitia*)' among the passions; when rationally controlled by the more active part of man, the intellectual appetite, they could be

⁵ Rivers, *Reason*, 125–6; Alec Ryrie, *Being Protestant in Reformation Britain* (Oxford, 2013), 40–1.

⁶ Thomas Dixon, *From Passion to Emotions: The Creation of a Secular Psychological Category* (Cambridge, 2006), 54, 63–81.

⁷ Rivers, *Reason*, 125.

⁸ Dixon, *From Passion*, 28–56.

part of a virtuous life.⁹ Susan James has argued that through the seventeenth century (particularly among the Cambridge Platonists) there was in fact a greater understanding of the sensual and affective nature of knowledge.¹⁰ This has not yet been fully brought to bear on the religious culture of the period following the Restoration. The religiosity of these north-western English Protestants thus demonstrated a continued, even enhanced, commitment to that relationship with feeling that Ryrie has observed among their Reformation forebears. The cultivation of feeling was a means of experiencing God and revelation. It was, however, to be managed and examined, lest the Christian be over-confident in the assurance of God's grace.¹¹

Protestants across the region demonstrated in their life-writings engagement with this culture of cultivating and managing feeling by taking inspiration from the Bible. The lay and clerical Protestant men and women, with varying degrees of conformity to the Church of England, whom this article will consider sought to emulate biblical precedent, translating into the religious sensibilities of daily life the model of affective piety that they found in the Book of Psalms in particular. Such life-writing as a devotional practice also saw the translation of these biblical models of affectivity into their own experiences. Feeling worked alongside ritual and theology in generating a vigorous religiosity. Moreover, biblical citation was translated into injunctions to feeling where life-writings recorded the sermons they witnessed. Such texts, as Andrew Cambers has noted, are problematic as direct representations of interiority, given their composite nature.¹² Yet the influence of family members over how these Protestants presented their lives in writing, including the chronology of events as well as the inclusion of extracts from the Bible and didactic material, was not understood to prejudice the authenticity of their account. Protestant life-writers included these aspects as adding meaning to their experiences.¹³ Indeed, in regard to emotions, scholars such as Barbara

⁹ Ibid. 35–52, quotation at 43.

¹⁰ Susan James, *Passion and Action: The Emotions in Seventeenth-Century Philosophy* (Oxford, 1997), 228–9.

¹¹ Ryrie, *Being Protestant*, 40–7.

¹² Andrew Cambers, 'Reading, the Godly, and Self-Writing in England, circa 1580–1720', *JBS* 46 (2007), 796–825, at 798–802.

¹³ Roger Chartier, *Cultural History Between Practices and Representation* (Cambridge, 1988), 11; Carolyn Steedman, 'A Woman Writing a Letter', in Rebecca Earle, ed., *Epistolary Selves: Letters and Letter-Writers, 1660–1945* (Aldershot, 1999), 111–33, at 118; Patrick Coleman, Jayne Lewis and Jill Kowalik, eds, *Representations of the Self from the Renaissance to*

Rosenwein have argued that all emotions are mediated by linguistic construction and socialization, impacting upon their immediate experience and subsequent communication.¹⁴ Given this, the use of biblical citation can be seen as a creative process, providing expression for and description of the experiences of these Protestants. They simultaneously translated biblical narratives into their own experience and their own experiences into a biblical narrative.

The Bible provided these Protestants with a model of affectivity that they could translate into their own lives and seek to emulate. Indeed, this was particularly evident in the use of the Book of Psalms. On 16 October 1687, Sarah Savage (1664–1752), daughter of the eminent ejected minister Philip Henry, noted: ‘Thursd. Night in singing in ye Family Ps. 63 (barton) very affecting, I thought every line breathed divine affection thirsting & breathing after God & commun. wth. him’. Lamenting the apparent lack of zeal of her husband’s family, she noted how in the ‘63 Ps. comes in ye 5. My soul shall bee filled’, commenting: ‘here’s firm footing for Faith – hee has not cast me off I shall yet see his goodness in ye sanctuary bl. bee God’.¹⁵ Savage’s affective experience of God, which mirrored that of the psalmist, offered evidence that he had not abandoned her in spite of her difficult domestic situation. William Barton’s text, which they sang, was:

4 Thus will I bless thee all my days,
and celebrate thy fame:
My hands I will devoutly raise,
in thy most holy Name.
5 With marrow and with fatness fill’d
my longing soul shall be:

Romanticism (Cambridge, 2000); Henk Dragstra, Sheila Ottway and Helen Wilcox, eds, *Betraying Our Selves: Forms of Self-Representation in Early Modern English Texts* (London, 2000); Ronald Bedford, Lloyd Davis and Philippa Kelly, *Early Modern English Lives: Autobiography and Self-Representation, 1500–1660* (Aldershot, 2007), 2–5, 30–5; Adam Smyth, *Autobiography in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 2010), 2–12.

¹⁴ Barbara H. Rosenwein, ‘Problems and Methods in the History of Emotions’, *Passions in Context: Journal of the History and Philosophy of the Emotions* 1 (2010), 12–24; eadem, *Emotional Communities in the Early Middle Ages* (Bristol, 2007); eadem, ‘History of Emotions: Religious Emotions across the Medieval/Early Modern Divide – Barbara Rosenwein’, video lecture, University of Warsaw, 20 October 2014, online at: <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CqeQFbjTSgw>>, accessed 28 November 2014.

¹⁵ Chester, Cheshire Archives and Local Studies, Papers relating mainly to the Henry family, DBASTEN/8, Diary of Sarah Savage, fols [22^r–v].

My mouth shall joyn with joyful lips,
in giving praise to thee.¹⁶

The Psalms thus provided Savage with a text through which to guide her feeling. David's experience was translated into her own. Devotion was understood here as an inherently affective experience. Joy in the presence of God was a distinguishing characteristic of devotional practice. Barton's addition of 'longing soul', referencing the first verse of the psalm, coupled with the joyfulness of the lips (common to the King James and Geneva translations), suggested that Protestants such as Savage sought out and revelled in materials that provided a strongly affective piety to translate into their own experience.

Savage frequently aligned her own experience with that of David. On 16 September 1687 she noted that on Friday having heard 'good news from Dear Relations yt morn read in course Ps. 38 could heartily address mysf to God as ye Psalmist in ye Psalm Lord all my desire is before thee hee knows wt in my [heart] to ask before I ask it'.¹⁷ The practice of piety here was to foster one's feeling in imitation of David. Savage translated the desire of the Psalmist, into her own experience of thanksgiving. She cited from verse 9: 'my desire is before thee; and my groaning is not hid from thee', providing a model of affectivity but also the form of expression with which to articulate this within the confines of her spiritual journal. Given her nonconformity (Savage, like her family, continued to attend Church of England services but seems to have taken communion only in dissenting congregations), this imitation of the affectivity of the psalmist might seem unsurprising, given the strong attachment to psalm-singing observed within godly culture from the sixteenth century and the established view that nonconformists were the especial heirs of this tradition.¹⁸

¹⁶ Ps. 63: 4–5, in William Barton, *The book of Psalms in metre Close and proper to the Hebrew: smooth and pleasant for the metre. To be sung in usual and known tunes. Newly translated with amendments, and addition of many fresh metres. Fitted for the ready use, and understanding of all good Christians* (London, 1682), 165.

¹⁷ Savage, Diary, fol. [20^v].

¹⁸ Patrick Collinson, 'Elizabethan and Jacobean Puritanism as Forms of Popular Religious Culture', in Christopher Durston and Jacqueline Eales, eds, *The Culture of English Puritanism, 1560–1700* (Basingstoke, 1996), 32–57, at 48–9; Christopher Durston and Jacqueline Eales, 'The Puritan Ethos, 1560–1700', *ibid.* 1–31, at, 19; Rivers, *Reason*, 52.

Edmund Harrold (1678–1721), however, made similar pleas on a regular basis. Harrold was of broadly high-church sympathies. A wigmaker resident in Manchester, he attended the Collegiate Church most frequently and expressed support for the controversialist Henry Sacheverell. On 25 September 1713, after concluding his third marriage, he prayed: ‘O Lord God who hast joined us together in holy wedlock, grant yt we may always live worthy of yt state in sobriety, chastity and love and fidelity’.¹⁹ Prior to this marriage Harrold recorded on 18 June 1713: ‘Oh my heart is sorrowful for my sin and vanity. Lord, help and direct me for ye best, not yt I heartily desire to settle, however, thy will be done.’²⁰ After recording the sermon he heard on 27 July 1712, he ended the entry: ‘O Lord, I beseech thee, grant me peace in thee, thro’ Jesus Christ our Lord amen.’²¹ Harrold drew upon spiritual ejaculation, in imitation of the psalmist, in his own record. The affectivity of the Psalms was translated into his devotional practice of diary-keeping as it was for Savage. It was also true of Thomas Jolly (1629–1703), a Lancashire nonconformist minister who frequently employed these groans in his notebook. He wrote in February 1678: ‘Oh! The signall providence of God as to my outward man in Manchester’, having escaped unscathed after a fall from his horse.²² These Protestants found in David a model of how to express their feeling in a godly manner and pray. This ‘textual groaning’ probably also served to mitigate the quietness of diary-writing, sustaining that suspicion of silent prayer which Reformation Protestants exhibited. These ejaculations, even in written form, were a means of stirring up the affections.²³ Moreover, by using biblical precedents they communicated a fervency of religiosity which avoided the extremes of sectarian enthusiasm. Biblical models thus added affective inflection, which also allowed these Protestants to straddle the divide between the fervency of Spirit-led prayer and praying with a book which John Craig has observed.²⁴

¹⁹ *The Diary of Edmund Harrold, Wigmaker of Manchester 1712–15*, ed. Craig Horner (Aldershot, 2008), 90.

²⁰ *Ibid.* 77.

²¹ *Ibid.* 23.

²² Henry Fishwick, ed., *The Note Book of the Rev. Thomas Jolly A.D. 1671–1693, Extracts from the Church Book of Altham and Wymondhouses A.D. and an Account of the Jolly Family of Standish, Gorton, and Altham*, Chetham Society n.s. 33 (Manchester, 1894), 33.

²³ Rylie, *Being Protestant*, 212.

²⁴ John Craig, ‘Bodies at Prayer in Early Modern England’, in Alec Rylie and Natalie Mears, eds, *Worship and the Parish Church in Early Modern England* (Aldershot, 2013), 173–95, at 181–2.

The Bible was also a source of direct exhortation to feeling. Sermons preached at public worship and lessons taught at family exercises drew frequently upon biblical calls to affectivity. These could take the form of rather conventional appeals to Christian charity and love. On 5 January 1687/8 Sarah Savage, noted that 'Dear Fath. came below to Fam. Prayer read. Eph. 5. Vr 25. where Husbs. are bid to love yeir wives as Xt. the church'.²⁵ James Parker, a layman living in Chorley, Lancashire, noted on 1 February 1740/1 that his local curate 'Mr. Ellinson' preached from 'Romans ch. 12 vss 9 part of it. Let Love be without dissimulation'.²⁶ These were principally moral lessons, though they required the Christian to feel as much as act. In his preaching tour of Lancashire and Cheshire in 1672, Henry Maurice (c.1636–82), a nonconformist minister, preached 'from John, 15.13', which asserted: 'Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends'. Maurice further reflected that he 'found ebbings & flowings in my spirit' and that of his audience who 'seemed much affected, & seemed very kind'.²⁷ The content of the biblical citation was, like the above, a moral lesson once more requiring the Christian to engage their affections. It was the movement of Maurice's feelings and those of the audience, however, which bore witness to his effectiveness as a preacher. While all these extracts were moral injunctions, their efficacy was predicated on that translation of God's truth from head to heart that Rivers has observed in Baxter's work.²⁸

On 1 June 1712 Edmund Harrold recorded Dr Radley Aynscough preaching on Colossians 3: 2: 'Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth'. '[I]t behoves us', Harrold recorded, 'to look on what sort of objects we place our affections on, whether earthly or heavenly'. In contrast with earthly things, 'heavenly objects never fail of satisfieing us, tho our appetites be boundless'. Indeed, he continued, there was an 'ocean of pleasures yt can never be fathomed' at God's right hand, and 'Rivers of pleasures for everyone, to wch fountain of bliss God bring us all, for Jesus sake, amen'.²⁹ The effusive

²⁵ Savage, Diary, fol. [26^v].

²⁶ Preston, Lancashire Record Office, MS Hawkshead-Talbot of Chorley, DDHK 9/1/77, Memorandum Book of James Parker, unpaginated.

²⁷ B. Cottle and M. J. Crossley Evans, 'A Nonconformist Missionary Journey to Lancashire and Cheshire in July 1672', *Transactions of the Historical Society of Lancashire and Cheshire* 137 (1988), 77–91, at 86.

²⁸ Rivers, *Reason*, 125.

²⁹ *Diary of Edmund Harrold*, ed. Horner, 2.

affectivity of Aynscough's sermon as recorded by Harrold showed how biblical injunctions to feeling could translate into a vigorous religiosity. Of course, as with Savage, Parker and Maurice, this required control over feeling, directing it properly in the worship of God. Such control was perfectly consistent with the Christian philosophical tradition and did not diminish the felt element, but merely redirected it. It mirrored Phyllis Mack's characterization of the 'Methodist's ability to feel correctly', a practice which meant that feeling rather than intellect was the primary medium of accessing divine truth.³⁰ Biblical injunctions to feeling were translated into experience by way of recording these sermons and lessons.

Harrold's diary bore witness to the didactic role of the Bible, though here too feeling played an important role in mediating teaching and practice. On 3 August 1712 he recorded a sermon preached on 1 Corinthians 12: 27, from which the preacher maintained 'yt tis a blessed thing to keep union in ye body, mysticall as well as natural, yt ye be no schism in ye body, but yt all ye members may honour and obey ye head even Christ'.³¹ On 29 November 1713, Harrold recorded a sermon on Matthew 16: 27 regarding 'Christ's second Advent, when ye son of man shall come in glory, with his holy angels, and yn shall he reward every man according to his works'.³² Although Harrold did not elaborate upon the use of this verse in 1 Corinthians, it likely served as a means to defend the established Church and perhaps to take a swipe at nonconformity. Similarly, the verse from Matthew justified the Church's greater focus on works after the Restoration, in some opposition to the focus on the power of grace that had been vaunted by the sects of the Interregnum.³³ Yet even for Harrold, teaching frequently had a strongly affective element. Preaching on 5 October 1712 from 1 Corinthians 11: 28, Aynscough asserted 'yt it is every mans duty to examin and communicate'. The dynamics of this practice of self-examination were mediated by the affections. Impediments to communicating were '1st, ignorance, 2^{ly}, self love, 3^{ly}, pride', which Harrold recorded had to be conquered if one was to 'obtain to ye end of our hopes, even ye salvation of our souls'. Here, of course, some feelings were to be restrained in

³⁰ Mack, *Heart Religion*, 15.

³¹ *Diary of Edmund Harrold*, ed. Horner, 24.

³² *Ibid.* 96.

³³ John Spurr, 'The Lay Church of England', in Tapsell, ed., *Later Stuart Church*, 101–24, at 102.

order that others, notably the hope of redemption, might be exercised. Aynscough's second sermon that day extolled the 'satisfaction in living virtuously, holily, and temperately in this world'. This was the fount of 'al[!] our comforts of long life[:] riches and honours, a good name, and peace of conscience, temprall and spirituall etc.'³⁴ The focus, conventional in that religious culture which followed the Restoration, on a practical religion dominated by moral, Christian action nonetheless also involved an affective element. Much as for Baxter, the imperative of God's command to live morally was appreciated as much through feeling as the intellect. It provided satisfaction and comfort to the believer. Quiet feelings perhaps, but as Phyllis Mack has argued, these were appreciated by the Methodists later as the signs of the sanctified Christian.³⁵

Biblical discourses of the heart, reflective of the emphasis that Wallace has observed in works by leading nonconformist authors, provided these Protestants with models that they could translate into their own quotidian devotional practices. The strong role played by the heart in these discourses demonstrated that pietist and Wesleyan 'heart-religion' which 'emphasised passivity and feeling' had some precedent here.³⁶ On 6 November 1687, after meeting God in Sunday worship, Sarah Savage noted:

I am much comforted by yt. Promise Ps. 37. Delight thysf also in ye Ld. & hee shal give thee ye desires of thy [heart] & wt. more can I wish Dear Lord it is the desire of my [heart] yt. I may delight myself in thee thou art ye strength of my [heart] & my Portion for ever ...³⁷

Such affective piety, centred upon the heart, was central to Savage's devotional record. Indeed, here the translation was also significant. The King James translation, the most popular version from 1660, rendered the end of the verse 'he shall give thee the desires of thine heart', following precedents in the Geneva and Coverdale Bibles which rendered it 'hee shall giue thee thine hearts desire'.³⁸ The

³⁴ *Diary of Edmund Harrold*, ed. Horner. 38.

³⁵ Mack, *Heart Religion*, 35.

³⁶ *Ibid.* 13.

³⁷ Savage, *Diary*, fol. [23^r].

³⁸ Ps. 37: 4, Geneva Bible (1587) and Coverdale Bible (1535); Scott Mandelbrote, 'The English Bible and its Readers in the Eighteenth Century', in Isabel Rivers, ed., *Books and their Readers in Eighteenth-Century England: New Essays* (London, 2001), 35–78, at 37; Femke Molekamp has argued that there was a market for the Geneva Bible and hybrid Geneva-

second citation, Psalm 73: 26, was a popular one for Savage, who repeated it as she besought God for children on 16 November 1687.³⁹ Many years later, on 17 April 1737, Richard Kay (1716–51), a Presbyterian attending Bury Chapel, also besought the Lord to ‘help me now to make haste, and not delay to keep thy Commandments, and ever be thou the Strength of my Heart, and my Portion forever’.⁴⁰ Here again this demonstrated a more robust affectivity than the Douai-Rheims, which read ‘thou art the God of my heart, and the God that is my portion for ever’. The King James translation put a greater emphasis upon the passivity of the believer, who was dependent on God and his management of their affections. Within their own writings, these Protestants thus translated the affective norms and heart-religion of their translations of the Bible into devotional practice.

The heart-religion inherent within the Bible was also translated into the writings of those who attended and communicated at the established Church. The life of Richard Illidge (1637–1709), a farmer and an officer in the Cheshire militia, recorded him drawing upon James 5: 16 when he prayed: ‘Lord, give me Wisdom from above, and teach me to pray, so that my Prayers may be acceptable to Thee, my God, that every Prayer may come warm from the Heart, may be an *effectual fervent Prayer*, which *availeth much*’.⁴¹ Although his life was edited and written up by Matthew Henry, a family friend, Illidge owned himself ‘to be a Member of the established Church of *England*, which, I think, is not exceeded by any other in Purity’.⁴² The extract demonstrated how translation of one’s devotional exercise into biblical narrative was perfectly compatible with allegiance to the Church of England. Illidge understood feeling as essential to prayer, effective only so far as he had a warm heart capable of fervency. This was also true of members of the congregation of Thomas Brockbank (1671–1709), then curate of Sefton, Lancashire. On 9 April 1705 two of them contacted him to request that he ‘preach a funeral Sermon

King James Bibles well into the eighteenth century. She has however, also stressed the continuities between these editions in both material and expository terms: ‘The Geneva and the King James Bibles: Legacies of Reading Practices’, *Bunyan Studies* 15 (2011), 11–17.

³⁹ Diary of Sarah Savage, [fol. 24’].

⁴⁰ *The Diary of Richard Kay, 1716–51, of Baldingstone, near Bury, a Lancashire Doctor*, ed. W. Brockbank and F. Kenworthy, Chetham Society 3rd ser. 16 (Manchester, 1968), 7.

⁴¹ Matthew Henry, *An account of the life and death of lieutenant Illidge*, 2nd edn (London, 1720), 39.

⁴² *Ibid.* 67.

tomorrow for Elizabeth Harrison'. One of the texts chosen by Harrison prior to her death was Psalm 38: 9–10, which declared: 'Lord, all my desire is before thee; and my groaning is not hid from thee. My heart panteth, my strength faileth me: as for the light of mine eyes, it also is gone from me.' Again, the affective nature of this citation was evident. It demonstrated a model of the good death through affective engagement with the divine. The heart was engaged, albeit with the last of its strength, and was overcome with feeling just before the expiration of the body. Such a passage was a natural choice for a funeral, yet its selection allowed the Bible's affectivity to be translated into the funeral service.

Bible passages were also cited to demonstrate the need for heartfelt conversion. On 17 August 1712 Edmund Harrold recorded hearing a sermon on Jeremiah 13: 23: 'Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil'. From this Harrold noted that it was indeed 'so hard ... that its almost imposible as to nature, but God thro his grace can reform ye heart and thro' his grace bring good out of evill etc.'⁴³ This lesson suggested that the Church of England minister was determined that his congregation should translate the calls to a moral life, within biblical injunctions, into an affective exercise. Matthew Henry, reflecting on his own conversion, noted on 18 October 1675:

it was three years ago that I began to be convinc'd, hearing a Sermon by my Father on *Psal*, li. 7. *The Sacrifices of God are a broken Spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.* I think it was then that that melted me, afterwards I began to enquire after Christ.⁴⁴

The sermon and the words of the Bible provided for Henry a model of Christian affectivity. The psalmist's broken and contrite heart was translated into Henry's experience as a measure of his conversion. Such an account was conventional within the conversion narrative genre but it nonetheless demonstrated that conversion was a matter for the heart.⁴⁵ The translation of one's own experience into a biblical narrative ensured this.

⁴³ *Diary of Edmund Harrold*, ed. Horner, 28.

⁴⁴ William Tong, *An account of the life and death of Mr. Matthew Henry, minister of the gospel at Hackney, who dy'd June 22, 1714 in the 52d year of his age* (London, 1716), 12.

⁴⁵ D. Bruce Hindmarsh, *The Evangelical Conversion Narrative: Spiritual Autobiography in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 2005), 18–21, 31–2, 324.

The Bible provided models of affectivity that these north-western English Protestants in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries could translate into their own devotional exercises. It provided them with forms of expression with which they could live out that heart-religion, observed by historians, inherent within the didactic material of the period. This was as true of those who attended and communicated at the Church of England, with both high- and low-church sympathies, as of nonconformists. This engagement with feeling was thus more mainstream than has necessarily been appreciated within the existing historiography. The cultivation of feeling explored here gives pause to those narratives which stress the dominance of the reaction against enthusiasm within the religious culture of the period. The strong role that feeling played in the religiosity of the Evangelical Revival has considerable precedent here. The extracts explored demonstrate a commitment by these Protestants to a vital and vigorous religiosity, guided by the affective discourses of the Bible, within an intensely felt piety. The Psalms in particular, and the commitment to adding affective inflection in imitation of David, allowed these life-writers to assimilate their affections with biblical precedents. Narratives drawn from the Bible were translated into their own experiences in personal, familial and public devotion to make sense of them. Such experiences were also translated into biblical narratives to provide structure to their witness. Feeling was not always presented by these Protestants as an unqualified good. Control, management and even repression were features of their engagement with this interiority. This was, however, consistent with Christian philosophical precedent and sought to channel affective energies in the appropriate direction, the worship of God. Feeling was thus a medium of devotion, conversion, teaching and ritual. The act of transcribing biblical citations, from sermons, family lessons and personal reading was a devotional act. It was one that translated the affectivity of the Bible into experience.